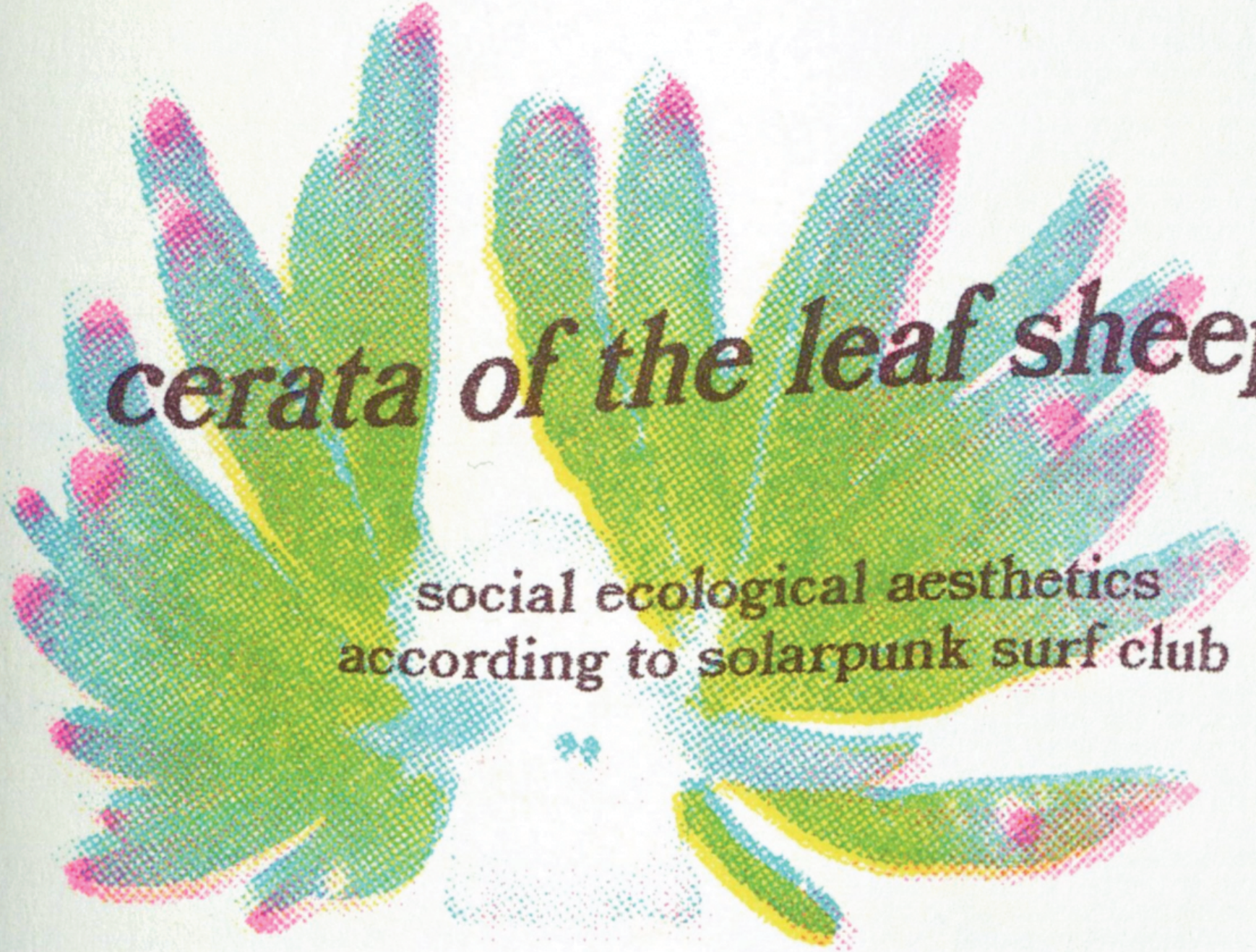

cerata of the leaf sheep

social ecological aesthetics
according to solarpunk surf club

The following concepts, heuristics, and methodologies are neither comprehensive nor absolute. They are appendages intended to cultivate dialogue and elaborate an eco-revolutionary practice. To our global community of comrades and friends, we offer this playful provocation:

sap-sucking solar-powered sea slugs
signify social ecological aesthetics
AKA *solarpunk*.

symbiotic piracy

Leaf sheep graze on algae, absorbing and storing chloroplasts in horn-like appendages called cerata. There, the chloroplasts serve two vital purposes: camouflage against the leaf sheep's predators *and solar energy conversion.* Leaf sheep are thus revealed as one of the only animals capable of photosynthesis; their cerata as reservoirs of life-making potentiality.

Solarpunk, too, is a vessel for stowing and trafficking utopian imaginaries. Like the leaf sheep, solarpunks freely use, adapt, and redistribute adequate forms as a means of prefiguring free culture and usufructian property relations.

collaboration

The production of art is always already a social ecological process rooted in interdependence and mutuality. Just as leaf sheep of different sizes congregate in groups to track resources, find mates, and avoid predation, solarpunks unite in our diversity by foregrounding cooperation and egalitarian divisions of labor.

In the biotic world, more viable, resilient, and beautiful systems emanate from ever greater combinations of interests, specialism, and variety. Solarpunk, accordingly, reveals all "sculptures" to be assemblages of converging ideations and executions—not the work of lone visionaries but of complementary ensembles.

utopian realism

The dialectic between the real and the possible creates the tension out of which solarpunk emerges. As leaf sheep have developed their latent ability to photosynthesize, solarpunk must also "do the impossible": confront the actuality of collapse with the potentiality of utopia by transfiguring the current realities of our lives into evidence of desirable, still-possible worlds.

eco-jugaad

The ruins of the Capitalinian are mines for rebuilding. Like leaf sheep, solarpunks make the most of available materials in order to directly address proximate needs. We do this through a practice of iterative, frugal, ecological, and often unconventional bricolage.

prefigurative epistemology

Utopia is a way of knowing. Because means and ends are co-constitutive, prefiguration is not only a political strategy but a theory of knowledge. The leaf sheep knows how to sustainably harvest the sun; an understanding developed processually through logics of iteration, spontaneity, and evolution—knowledge, in other words, constituted in everyday experiences and creation.

Liberatory knowledge is therefore embedded within daily moments of collective struggle, emerging through the emancipatory praxis of social movements. To act is to learn is to act: the making of abundant futures, like the making of knowledge itself, is a prefigurative practice of everyday life.

emplacement

Biological evolution is emplaced in ecological niches where combinations of needs, spontaneity, and interaction give rise to unique relationships such as leaf sheep-algae symbiosis. Solarpunk is likewise embedded within specific conditions of social ecological (re)production, made by practitioners whose labor is grounded in real places (i.e. watersheds, bioregions), histories (i.e. ancestral memories, legacies of freedom) and identifiable communities (i.e. neighborhoods, affinity groups, multispecies kinship and caring relations).

coherence

Capitalism fragments the world into hyperreality. Solarpunk responds by reassembling the fragments—like leaf sheep assemble algal plastids—into coherent experiences of autonomy, communality, and reharmonization.

open culture

As cerata's translucent membranes reveal their innermost workings, solarpunks openly share their ideas, strategies, emotions, techniques, and materials. This methodological transparency, sincerity, and generosity nurtures the creative commons, amplifies collective imagination, and conjures intimacy through affective immanence.

familiarization

Solarpunk reduces the anxiety intrinsic to social change by transforming passive viewers and consumers into active collaborators and producers. Through embodied practice, the radically new begins to look and feel familiar, recognizable, comprehensible, intuitive, and plausible. If potent actualities such as a solar-powered animal can familiarize a new sense of the real, what other (r)evolutionary potentialities can solarpunk educe?

solarpunk as gardener as solarpunk

Solarpunks sow and nurture material processes that contain inherent uncertainty. Like the leaf sheep, we assume the porosity and impermanence of forms. We make decisions that account for long-term relevance, generational transfer, and potential reuse. In working and learning with the complex, unpredictable processes of nature, both leaf sheep and solarpunks are caretakers of a sensuous ecosystem.

beauty is aliveness

Social ecological aesthetics attain a living quality—a cycle of breath, a process of becoming—often lush and sinuous and always in situ. Solarpunk's beauty abides in the full spectrum of life in which birth, growth, death, and decomposition are undulating transients in time's material flow. As the real unfolds in a constant state of motion, cerata are sites of ubiquitous activity; a living sign held aloft in vibrant permutation.

Cerata of the Leaf Sheep was written, designed, and printed by Solarpunk Surf Club as a working document of our experiences as practitioners within the solarpunk milieu. You are invited to distribute, remix, adapt, and build upon this material in any medium or format, so long as you provide attribution and license your modifications under identical terms.

Solarpunk Surf Club is an artist collective that creates and curates egalitarian platforms for surfing the waves of still-possible worlds. We elaborate on the aesthetics of solarpunk in order to bring forth the latent horizontality and communalism inherent in social ecological reharmonization. Our works politicize, historicize, and demystify a collective ecological, utopian future.

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